The Three Musketeers by Alexandre Dumas

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Summary Part Five

Milady learns that she was captured by Lord de Winter and is supposed to be exiled to an island where she can do no more harm. De Winter puts his most trusted, cold hearted solider John Felton in charge of preventing her from escaping or trying to seduce the guards posted outside her door. After five days, Milady is successful with seducing Felton. On the night before she is to be sent to exile, Felton helps her to escape her jail room and gets her onto a boat that would take her back to France. But before they could leave together for France, Felton had to retrieve papers for the exile of Milady from the Duke of Buckingham for de Winter. The next day when Felton was retrieving the papers, Felton demanded the Duke pardon her of her crimes. The Duke denied him and Felton fatally stabbed the Duke. Milady escapes to a convent to stay for a few days until she can continue her journey. At the convent, she discovers that Madame Bonacieux is being kept there also. Milady befriends her, claiming to be one of d’Artagnan’s best friends. Madame Bonacieux confides in Milady that d’Artagnan is coming for her within the next day or so.

The man from Meung whose identity is Comte de Rochefort, the Cardinal's personal spy, visits Milady. They formulate a plan to get Milady out of the convent and Milady plans to take Madame Bonacieux with her. Just as the two are sitting down to eat dinner Milady hears the sound of horses approaching. It turns out to be the d’Artagnan and the three musketeers. Milady tells her it’s the Cardinal’s men and tries to get Bonacieux to escape with her. However, Madame Bonacieux becomes overcome with fear and cannot leave. Milady gives Madame Bonacieux a glass of wine that she laced with poison, claiming it would give her strength. Milady escapes and d’Artagnan rushes into the room only to find Bonacieux losing her senses. She dies in his arms within a few minutes of his arrival.

Moments after Bonacieux dies, Lord de Winter comes into the room. From here, the men leave the room to plan the next capture of Milady. All four servants of the musketeers are sent on four different paths to where they thought Milady was going. When the servants confirmed she was in Armentieres, one servant came back and the others watched her every movement until the musketeers arrived. With the musketeers came Lord de Winter and a red hooded stranger that Athos had recruited. Finally, the musketeers recaptured Milady and held trial with Porthos and Aramis as judges. Lord de Winter accused her of the murder of his brother and the murder of the Duke. D’Artagnan accused her of trying to poison him and the murder of Bonacieux. Athos told of the Fleur-de-Lis on her shoulder, which Milady challenged them to find the court that branded her. The hooded man then steps up and reveals himself to Milady which causes her to scream for mercy. He is the Headsmen of Lille. Milady is tried, found guilty of her crimes and is executed that night.

On the way back to La Rochelle, the musketeers run in de Rochefort who arrests d’Artagnan. The Cardinal accuses d’Artagnan of crimes based on what Milady had been telling the Cardinal. D’Artagnan informs the Cardinal that Milady is dead and produces a letter of absolution written by the Cardinal. The Cardinal gives d’Artagnan a promotion to lieutenant and asks that he fill in the name on the documents. D’Artagnan tries to have his friends take the promotion, claiming they were more worthy than he. However, his friends thought d’Artagnan deserved it more and thus d’Artagnan became a lieutenant. Eventually, the musketeers go their separate ways and lose touch with each other.

Analysis

I really wasn’t fond of the end, at all. I desperately wanted d’Artagnan to end up with Madame Bonacieux because of how severely he sought for her when she was kidnapped. I thought the story would have had a happier ending because of how joyous and light-hearted the story had begun. However, I wasn’t surprised that Milady was killed. I was glad she was finally caught and tried for her crimes, even if it wasn’t in a traditional court procedure. I was starting to hate her character because of how cruel she was being to everyone else.

Also, I was sad at the fact the inseparable musketeers drifted apart and didn’t stay in contact with each other. During the whole book, they were all for one and one for all. But in the end, they were all for themselves.

Application

I think many human ideals were compromised in this last section, specifically during the chapters of and after Milady’s recapture, trials, and execution. The musketeers were seeking justice for all the wrongs that Milady had committed, and yet when they reached their verdict it seemed wrong to carry out the penalty of death against a defenseless woman.

Love was another value that I thought was compromised. When Madame Bonacieux died, I don’t think d’Artagnan was given ample time to grieve the loss of his beloved. His friends suggested revenge was the best type of grieving, but I believe it changed his whole demeanor of his character. Before d’Artagnan was a happy, arrogant young man who was happy to be in the company of his friends, but at the end he became a hardened soul and wasn’t afraid of death.

One last ideal I saw come apart was the sense of togetherness. After Milady was killed, the musketeers lost their inseparableness and drifted apart. I think the mission of stopping Milady was the ultimate glue that held them together, and when she was gone the glue was gone also. In the end, I was sad they lost their glue.